

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 and 14-21 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 3-6, 8-12, 14, 15 and 17-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by Kunikiyo (US 6,717,267). Claims 7 and 16 stand rejected 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Kunikiyo (US 6,717,267). Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Kunikiyo (US 6,717,267) in view of Khan et al (US 6,853,070).

Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to more clearly define a novel and non-obvious aspect of embodiments of the invention. Support for the amendment can be found throughout the specification, drawings, and claims of the original application. For example, at page 6, the second and third paragraphs from the top of the page and Figs. 5 and 6 provide clear support for this amendment. Accordingly, the amendment adds no new matter to this application, and should be entered.

35 U.S.C 102(e) rejection in view of Kunikiyo (US 6,717,267)

Independent Claim 1

Independent claim 1 has been amended to define, among other distinguishing features, “a plurality of interconnect structures disposed in the insulating layer with a first end in contact with the semiconductor substrate and **a second end disposed substantially level with the power line**” and “wherein the second end of the plurality of interconnect structures are **substantially enveloped by a dielectric layer** in the power line” (*Emphasis added*).

Applicant respectfully submits that Kunikiyo does not teach or suggest that an end of the interconnect structures (i.e., 28A, 29A, 19C, 20A, 8A, 46) is ***disposed substantially level with the power line***. Moreover, Kunikiyo fails to teach or suggest that an end the interconnect structures is ***substantially enveloped by a dielectric layer*** in the power line. As such, independent claim 1 (as amended herein) is not anticipated by Kunikiyo.

For at least this reason, claim 1 patently defines over the cited art. As claims 2-12 and 14-21 depend from claim 1, claims 2-12 and 14-21 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from patentable independent claim 1.

For at least these reasons, this application is now in condition for allowance. Prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

CONCLUSION

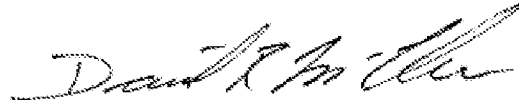
In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that all objections and/or rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

A credit card authorization is provided herein to cover the fee associated with the accompanying RCE application. No additional fee is believed to be due in connection

with this submission. If, however, any additional fee is believed to be due, you are hereby authorized to charge any such fee to deposit account No. 20-0778.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel R. McClure", written in a cursive style.

Daniel R. McClure, Reg. No. 38,962

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